3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

co-keepers with her, but they or one of them would substitute for her in such minor duties as taking the Pipe out of the lodge in the morning and bringing it back in the evening when she was sick abed, or busy, or during her menses. During menses the co-keeper was not allowed to handle the Pipe. After Crow Bull, during his keepership, gave away his head wife and co-keeper, Digger, to Small White Cow in a drunken spree and Digger went away as wife to Small White Cow, Crow Bull's second oldest wife, Coming Day became co-keeper in Digger's place. If a man at the time of becoming keeper had a young wife with an infant, she and the infant were sent away to another lodge as infant-crying was not allowed in the keeper's lodge where the Pipe was.

The Flat Pipe keeper, if he had two or more children, chose one and one only of his children, more commonly a boy, to be Pipe Child. It was a strict rule that he could keep only one of his children with him; all his other children had to live elsewhere than in their father's lodge, because, for one important reason, the Pipe was jealous. Some keepers were such rigorists in the matter that they practically forgot all their other children.

The children that were put out of their father's lodge naturally found this hard and rebelled, but they were trained to take it as a matter of course. A special interest was taken by others in such children as they were felt to be unfortunate in being deprived of the care and affection of their own parents. These children were permitted to visit their father and mother but they were under restrictions when they did so. Their grandmothers or foster parents would instruct them how to behave on such visits. They could not stay long, much less sleep there. They had to sit quiet in a special place in their parents' lodge and not roam around in it freely. They had to stay mostly near the door and not go near where the Pipe was. They were strictly forbidden to play in their father's lodge when visiting there. If their mother gave them something to eat they could eat it. They could sit on her lap. But they could not talk loud or shout. When so visiting they were not at ease and felt sort of foreign and awestricken. The Boy thought that these children may have been jealous of their sibling, the Pipe Child, but in such case they would have had to keep

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

severe winter, enjoying the things they had asked for and gotten. Petition was another, prayer that they would have good health and be spared visitation by Asta: [the epidemic being], and that they would go on living happily till spring. 796*

The seasonal rite lasted three days if the keeper was able and willing to supply the necessary food, but could be concluded all in one day. In either case the sweat-lodge rite preceded the various ceremonies carried out in the keeper's lodge. The Pipe bundle was always opened, but the Pipe itself was not uncovered to view or smoked unless the seasonal rite was combined with the Pipe smoking rite vowed by some individual. In the vowed and transfer rites the Pipe was uncovered and smoked. At the spring and fall rites all the bands and their members were expected to be on hand, but at the winter rite only the band or bands which had elected to stay with the keeper after the scattering of the tribe in the late fall. In nearly all major Gros Ventre rites, both the Pipe (Flat and Feathered) and Sacred Lodge rites, there was an alternation or contrast of "grave and gay," of reverent tension and pleasurable release. The release in the Sacred Lodges was very apt to take the form of boisterous amusement, of ritually countenanced horse-play and at times vulgarity. The release in the Pipe rites was of a less ebullient type, consisting mostly of recesses for friendly smoking and chatting and of a terminal feast. The nearest approach to boisterousness of horse play was the mixed singing contest (previously described) which was common to the transfer rite (but not the seasonal or vowed Pipe rites) and to the Crazy Lodge. [781]

The seasonal rites consisted of two main ceremonial sequences: the preliminary or opening ceremony of the sweat-lodge and the main ceremony in the keeper's lodge. We shall now take up these in turn.

The sweat-lodge ritual, according to the Gros Ventre origin story, was first taught by Ni:hohat to the bladder people shortly before he was killed and was first practiced by them just as he came to life again. (See No. 1 in Appendix.) The ritual as thus originally taught was carried out with an ordinary pipe. It was only afterwards that the Flat Pipe itself appeared, either shortly

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

Sincerity and reverence in praying were *de rigueur*. Deep sincerity and reverence were manifest in all the prayers at which we were present. And praying was never talked about jokingly by our informants. The Boy, on one occasion remarked: "If the Indian was praying he put so much reverence, veneration and faith into it that he would make you cry." Levity or irreverence at prayer were distinctly disapproved, as illustrated by the following incident told us by Singer, which occurred during a severe smallpox epidemic when she was a young girl:

"I was at my grandmother's. She had a big string of beads, and she said to me: 'Now, my grandchild, take this bucket and put these beads in, and you go too,' she said to my (female) cousin. 'Then you must both go to the top of this hill and dig a hole and put the beads in it and bury them. And of course you pray. Tell the Last Born (Last Child), 'I give you this so that I will not get the sickness (smallpox) and so that I will live to a good old age. You both pray!' So I did as I was told. But my cousin got to giggling and laughing, although I was sincere and meant every word I said. I don't know why my cousin thought it was funny, but that is the way she acted. When I got back I told the old woman: 'Grandmother, all the time I was praying and doing what you told me to do, this one here was just giggling as if she were making fun of me.' The old woman said: 'Oh, she should not have done that. I told you both to pray. Now you have spoiled everything. Always be sincere in your prayers. Mean every word you say.' So my cousin got smallpox and died from it. But I am still on earth."

The ritual object most commonly used with prayer was the pipe. A great many examples have been given. No less important than pipe smoking as a medium of prayer was singing. According to Gros Ventre tradition singing was, like smoking, originally sacred. It held a premier place in prayer rites, most of which began with song, each rite having its own song or songs sung only in this rite and in no other.

Three questions regarding prayer remain. Who was prayed to? What was asked for or expressed? When were prayers offered?

As has been emphasized, most prayers were directed first of